

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Mabel Hubbard Bell, March 11, 1909

Beinn Bhreagh, near Baddeck, Nova Scotia PRIVATE. March 11, 1909. Mrs. A. Graham Bell, 1331 Conn. Ave., Washington, D.C. Dear Mabel:

The following telegram from Mr. Fred Cook, the special correspondent of the London Times at Ottawa, has sent me a telegram marked private so that it was not telephoned from town but brought over privately from the Telegraph Office by John McDermid. The private part of the telegram reads as follows:—

Dr Bell to Mrs Bell

“His Excellency officially called attention home Government success your experiments. How long do you propose to continue? etc.”

This reads to me as though it might possibly be an unofficial enquiry from the Governor-General, Earl Grey, to find out what we propose to do. On this assumption, and reading between the lines, I would translate the telegram to mean— “Are you open to any proposition from the British Government about flying-machines?”

To this I have replied, equally between the lines, “Barcus is willing”. The actual language of my reply is as follows:—

Baddeck, March 11, 1909. To Fred Cook, Times Correspondent, Ottawa.

Thanks for telegram. The Aerial Experiment Association will be dissolved March thirty-one as we feel that our researches have now gone beyond the experimental stage, and we 2 are now discussing what to do commercially. This is private, not for publication. Cygnet description will follow later. No experiments today.

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(Signed) Graham Bell. As Mr. Cook has specially telegraphed that his telegram is private I hope you will consider this as confidential until further developments occur. A.G.B.